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Building a Healthy Community

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## **HCPH Confirms First West Nile Virus Human Case of the Season**

*Take Precautions to Protect Yourself and Your Family*

**Harris County, Texas (July 25, 2016)** - Harris County Public Health (HCPH) has confirmed the first West Nile Virus (WNV) human case of 2016 in Harris County. The virus was confirmed in an elderly patient from the southeast portion of Harris County.

“This first case of West Nile Virus in our community is a good reminder that mosquito-borne diseases are a very real concern. Individuals and families need to protect themselves against mosquito bites by reducing mosquito breeding habitats and by applying insect repellent properly when going outdoors.” said Dr. Umair A. Shah, Executive Director of HCPH.

Historically, July through September has been the peak timeframe for WNV transmission in Harris County. In 2015, there were 23 human cases of WNV illness in Harris County (excluding the City of Houston), and no WNV-related deaths. “Our mosquito surveillance program is key to identifying the presence of WNV in our community and it guides our efforts to help us better protect our residents.” stated Dr. Mustapha Debboun, Director of HCPH Mosquito Control.

As we move into the summer months, enjoy the outdoors but remember to protect yourself and your family from mosquito-borne diseases. Your best defense against being bitten is by being prepared. Remember to “Prevent the Bite, Day & Night!”

### **Personal Protection**

- When outdoors, prevent the bite by using an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains one of the following DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535. Follow product instructions.
- If possible, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks. For infants, place mosquito netting over infant carriers, cribs and strollers.

### **Mosquito-Proof Your Property**

- Don’t “feed” the storm drains. Sweep up lawn clippings, leaves and tree limbs.
- Remove/empty containers that can hold water such as tires, flowerpots and toys.
- Change water in birdbaths and pet water bowls every 3 to 5 days.
- Keep rain gutters free of debris.

*HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.*

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- Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes outside. Use your air conditioning, if possible.
- Household pets can be exposed to WNV. Contact your veterinarian for more information.

Most people who are infected with West Nile Virus show no or only mild symptoms such as: low grade fever, muscle aches, and headache. More severe signs and symptoms can include: high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, encephalitis, and rarely, death. If you think you have been infected with West Nile Virus, contact your health care provider.

For more information about West Nile Virus, please visit our website at [www.hcphtx.org](http://www.hcphtx.org).

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